

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KABUL 01909 201300Z

ACTION NEA-10

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FOR NEA ONLY, DEPUTY ASST SECRETARY DUBS

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: OVIP, AF (OMAR, DR ABDULLAH)
SUBJ: VISIT TO U.S. BY AFGHAN MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH,
DR ABDULLAH OMAR

REF: KABUL 1901

1. WHILE REFTEL CONTAINS THE ESSENTIAL DETAILS OF DR OMAR'S TRIP TO THE U.S., MAY 10-26, I WANT TO ADD A FURTHER COMMENT TO YOU ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE WHICH I ATTACH THE VISIT.

2. AS YOU WILL RECALL, OMAR BECAME MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH ONLY LAST YEAR, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS WITH THE WORLD HEALTH ORGACIZATION. HE HAS JUST BEEN REAPPOINTED AS THE FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTER UNDER THE NEW REPUBLICAN CONSTITUTION. HE HAS QUICKLY PROCEEDED TO ADD NEW LIFE, VITALITY AND DIRECTION TO A MINISTRY WHICH WAS IN REAL NEED OF SUCH LEADERSHIP. ALL OF US HERE HAVE THE GREATEST RESPECT FOR HIS ABILITIES. OMAR IS, MOREOVER, A PERSONABLE, ATTRACTIVE FIGURE. WITH THIS MIXTURE OF QUALITIES, HE MAKES A VERY IMPRESSIVE -- AND EFFECTIVE -- REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS GOVERNMENT.

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PAGE 02 KABUL 01909 201300Z

3. BECAUSE OMAR IS IMPRESSIVE, BUT, MORE IMORTANT, BECAUSE HE WILL BE THE HIGHEST RANKING AFGHAN OFFICIAL TO VISIT THE US SINCE THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION TOOK OFFICE, I FEEL WE SHOULD TRY TO GET HIM AT LEAST A COURTESY CALL ON THE SECRETARY OF HEW. PERHAPS SECRETARY CALIFANO COULD EVEN BE PERSUADED TO GIVE A LUNCHEON IN HIS HONOR. IN THE DEPARTMENT, WE HAVE

SUGGESTED THAT AID/W CARRY THE BALL, BUT IF YOU FEEL OMAR SHOULD MAKE HIGH-LEVEL COURTESY CALLS, E.G., ON ROY ATHERTON OR HIGHER, THEN I WOULD DEFER TO YOUR JUDGEMENT. THE IMPORTANT THING IS, I FEEL, TO GET OMAR THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE EXPOSURE TO THE NEW ADMINISTRATION, PARTICULARLY IN THE HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE AREAS.

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